

CHING LING and TING LING





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Ching Ling is a little boy who lives in China. Ching Ling has a chubby little sister. Her name is Ting Ling.

Every day Ching tells Ting, about something he did in school that day. One day after school Ching cried, "Ting, look, look!" Ting ran to see what he had to show her. Ching unrolled a piece of paper. On it were two Chinese words. They did not look like our words. They looked like designs. "I learned to write these today," said Ching. "I made them with brush and ink."

"Oh, please show me how you made them," asked Ting.

Ching was happy to do that. He took from his silk purse a thick, flat stick of dried ink. It looked like licorice. He rubbed the dried ink in a few drops of water, on a flat stone. Then he painted this , like two sticks crossed.



"That means ten," said Ching. Then he painted this sign 十. "That means rice." Ching must learn thousands of such picture letters, because Chinese do not have ABC's as we have.



"I'll be glad when I am old enough to go to school," sighed Ting.

"Now, little sister," said Ching, "come with me. I am going to fly my new kite."

Soon Ting and Ching were walking up the hill with the kite. Ching's shaved head shone in the sunlight. His pig-tail, or queue, bobbed up and down as he walked. Finally he said, "Now, watch my bird of happiness." The kite did look like a bird. It had green eyes, red wings and a striped purple and blue tail. "I call it my bird of happiness," said Ching, "because it sings when it flies through the air."

Ting's small, slanting eyes looked puzzled as she said, "I didn't know a kite could sing."

"This bird of happiness can," answered Ching. "Just listen when she is flying high." Ching unwound the kite string that was around a stick. Along came a rushing breeze. It lifted the bird of happiness. Together the



breeze and the bird went dancing, prancing in the sunlight. "Listen, Ting," said Ching.

Ting cocked her head on one side and listened. Then she smiled and said, "I hear the bird." Sure enough a lovely, soft whistling sound floated down from the sky. "What makes the paper bird sing?" asked Ting.

"I fastened a reed onto the kite," explained Ching. "It is a piece of coarse grass. When the wind blows on the reed, it makes that lovely sound."

"The bird is dancing to the music," said Ting looking so pleased.

Ching laughed. He looked up at his kite. "Yes, it is hopping around like a dancing bird."

Just then Ching and Ting saw something strange, walking up the hill. It looked like a big goldfish, but of course, a goldfish can't walk up hills. It was a big, paper kite. Be-



hind it was a little boy. "Let's have a battle with our kites," said the little boy, whose name was Ho.

"Oh yes," agreed Ching, "let's try to cut each other's kite string in half."



“How can you do that?” asked Ting.

“Look here,” said Ho. “I dyed the string black so that it can easily be seen, when the kite is flying. Then I glued powdered glass to it. That makes the string sharp enough



to cut another one." Ting still looked puzzled but she waited and watched.

Soon Ho had his bright goldfish swimming through the air. "I hear a tinkle, tinkle," said Ting. "What is it?"

"That is from the bells fastened on my kite," explained Ho.

Now Ho and Ching held tightly to their kite sticks. Each one wanted to win the battle. Each wanted to prove his skill.

Now the fish and bird were side by side. Ho tried to work his string over Ching's string. Ching tried to cross Ho's string with his own sharp one.

The bird flew up and down, back and forth. The goldfish darted forward and backward, now sideways, now up and down. The bells tinkled merrily. The whistle made



sweet sounds. Ting jumped up and down with excitement. Ching and Ho were breathless.

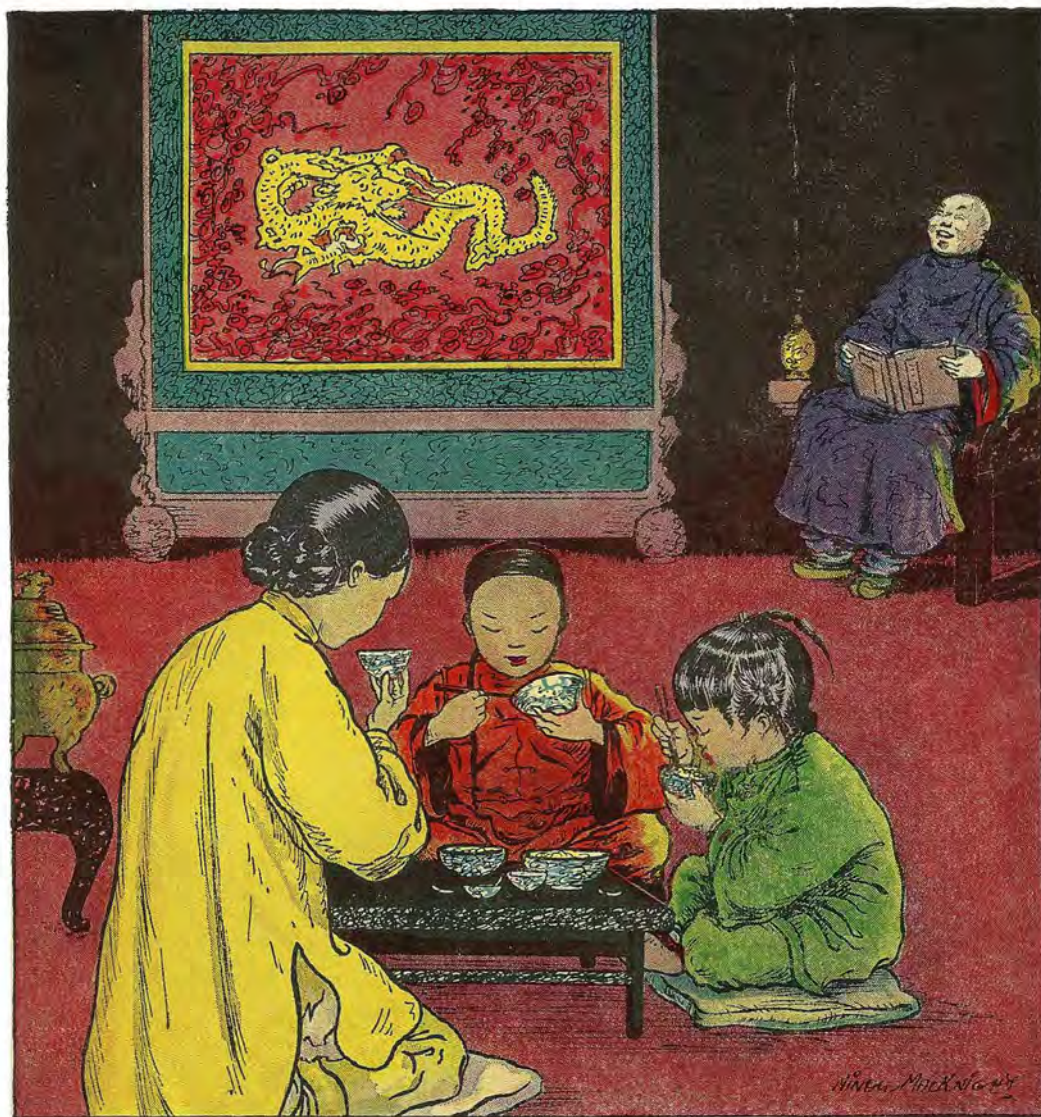
Suddenly the bird of happiness flew up, up in the air. It had been cut free. Ho's goldfish had won the game. Ching was sorry he had lost, but he was a good sport. He praised Ho for his skill.

Ting and Ching looked a little sad, as they watched that beautiful bird-kite fly away. The wind was carrying it over the hills. It seemed to get smaller and smaller. Now the bird of happiness was out of sight.

Then Ho, Ting and Ching started to walk slowly down the hill.

"I'll help you make a new kite," said Ho.

"That would be kind of you," said Ching. "I'll buy some rice paper, bamboo sticks, paste, and string tomorrow. See, I have saved some money." He reached in his pocket and



pulled out a string. On the string were four Chinese pieces of money. They had square holes in the center. That is why they could be carried on a string.

Ching and Ting were hungry when they ate their rice

dinner that night. The Chinese eat rice every day. Sometimes, when Chinese meet along the street, instead of saying, "How do you do?" they say, "Chihfahn," which means "Have you eaten rice?" Ching and Ting lifted their bowls of rice and meat to their lower lips. Then they pushed the food into their mouths with chopsticks. The Chinese use chopsticks, instead of forks and spoons.

After dinner it was story time. Their father read a story to them. He started from the back of the book. He read up and down on the page, instead of back and forth. That is the way the Chinese read.

Soon Ting's head nodded. Ching was sleepy, too. They had had a busy day. Off they went to bed. You would never guess of what their beds are made. They are made of bricks! In winter a fire is made under the brick beds to keep the sleepers warm. Now Ching Ling and Ting Ling have been tucked safely under soft covers. Let's say, "how foon." That means "good night" in Chinese.

ELIZABETH F. MCCRADY





CHING LING AND TING LING

See the kite that Ching Ling holds,
I'd like to watch it fly
On its long and strong string,
Above his head so high.

See small Ting Ling's straight black hair,
It's plaited in a queue.
Her slanting eyes are twinkling,
She likes to fly kites too.

K.C.G.